



#SheSurfsFreedom

CSW67

WAGGGS Reaction to CSW 67 Draft Agreed Conclusions Rev.1_1

General comments:

The World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) welcomes the CSW 67 Draft Agreed Conclusions. As the only global movement geared entirely to every girl and any girls, with 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 152 countries, we express our support for much of the language included so far. As an organization representing a diverse movement of women and girls from across the world, we are particularly pleased to see a focus on intersectional approaches to tackling gender inequality and gender-based violence, particularly at a time when abuse against different groups of women and girls is rising in online environments.

However, more needs to be done to ensure that the final outcome document goes further to address the systemic gender inequality that upholds the exclusion of both women and girls from the digital environment. In addition, we are calling for the role that boys and men must play to stop gender-based violence, on and offline, as gender equality allies and responsible digital citizens, to be more explicitly addressed throughout the document. This is particularly relevant in the context of the increasing radicalisation of men and boys by misogynistic influencers and platforms. In addition to these points, we urge member states to protect and include the language proposed below to ensure girls and women are at the forefront and reap the benefits of innovation and technological change and technological advancements.





Safeguards against misuses

WAGGGS believes in creating safe, accessible places both online and offline for all to enjoy equally. We firmly condemn all forms of gender-based violence and strongly urge member states to **PROTECT paragraph 45**. It is also vitally important to recognize the explicit responsibility of social media companies to address this violence as they continue to profit from online gender-based violence and harassment while simultaneously failing to protect women and girls who use their platforms.

Proposed language:

45.

(24.1. + 24.5. + 24.6. + 24.9.)

The Commission expresses its concern that emergent digital technologies remain widely unregulated and recognizes that it is imperative to set concrete obligations for all entities which own, manage and govern digital technologies and services **[ADD particularly social media companies,]** to tackle harmful and illegal content and other aspects of digital technologies which are having an adverse impact on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and to introduce due diligence obligations to identify, prevent and mitigate societal risks and negative impacts of digital technology on women and girls.

Technology and innovation strategies

WAGGGS welcomes the language in paragraphs 47 and 48. The integration of a gender perspective in innovation and technological change will be essential for reaching gender equality in the global tech sector. While women and girls will benefit from inclusive technology and digital education, so too will their families, communities and economies. We especially welcome the commitment to a multi-stakeholder approach, however, we believe this language needs to be strengthened to ensure such an approach includes the voices of girls.



Proposed language:

47.

[ADD The Commission recognizes that this inequality continues to facilitate technology-facilitated gender-based violence and the existing weak measures which address it.]

48.

The Commission emphasizes that national strategies on technology and innovation should provide a cohesive basis for gender-responsive policies and programming that fulfils the human rights and needs of women and girls. It recognizes the need to take a whole-of-society and multistakeholder approach [ADD which prioritize the lived-experience of all women and girls] so that each actor contributes to putting in place the conditions that will shape infrastructure, regulations, business, investments and education systems and provide a more inclusive digital environment. It takes note of the work of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality and other multi-stakeholder efforts and dialogues.



Violence

We are disappointed that paragraph 51 has been closed without including our suggestion to **ADD** the following language: **The Commission is also concerned that this exclusion from participation and decision-making further compounds gender inequality which is the cause and a consequence of gender-based violence.**

Technology-facilitated violence

We are pleased that the language in paragraph 54 has been improved to put more emphasis on women's and girls' enjoyment of participation in public life and the enjoyment of their human rights. However, we believe it is also important that it recognizes both the increased risk of experiencing digital gender-based violence when they use their online platform to challenge misogyny, discrimination and gender inequality, particularly when they are participating in public life. This is an unacceptable limit on freedom of expression amongst women and girls; we know from our She Surfs Freedom survey that many girls and young women have changed their behaviour online as a result of negative experiences online.

In addition, we welcome the inclusion of the psychological impacts of gender-based violence in paragraph 55 and believe this language should be protected, particularly the emphasis on adolescent girls. In line with our advocacy calls, we would like to see this paragraph strengthened so that member states commit to addressing these impacts through mental health programmes, including body-confidence initiatives.

Proposed language:

54.

(19. + elements of 20.2.split.b.)

The Commission further condemns [technology-facilitated] gender-based violence and the emergence and rise of new harmful forms of societal narratives **[ADD including the increasing targeted harassment of women and girls who challenge misogyny, discrimination and gender inequality in online spaces]** which undermine and **discredit** women's and girls' online and offline expression, forcing women and girls to self-censor, de-platform or reduce their interaction in online and offline spaces, limiting their **full, equal and meaningful** participation in public life and the enjoyment of **their** human rights.

**Proposed
language:**

55.

[ADD The Commission emphasizes the need for accessible person-centred and trauma-informed national mental health programmes and body-confidence-building interventions both online and offline to address these mental well-being impacts.]

Policies to address technology-facilitated violence

WAGGGS is pleased to see a commitment to tackling all forms of gender-based violence through legislation and regulations in paragraphs 58, 59 and 60. These paragraphs demonstrate the need for a comprehensive definition of technology-facilitated gender-based violence to be adopted by the Commission to ensure national laws are as far-reaching as possible. It is for this reason that we also want to **PROTECT paragraph VVV**. And would emphasize that any such definition of technology-facilitated gender-based violence must be informed by the lived experiences of all women and girls to hold validity.

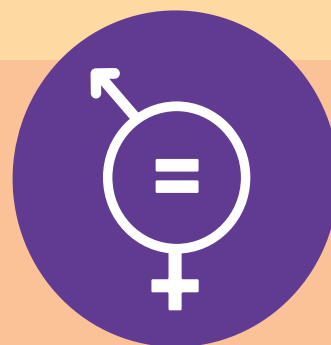
Girls

As the world's largest voluntary movement of women and girls, we are pleased to see a section specifically dedicated to girls, however we believe this should be larger than a single paragraph (61).

Girls are affected by all forms of gender-based violence, in addition to bullying (as mentioned in paragraph 61). For example, our She Surfs Freedom survey of girls and women across the world found that 45% of girls have received unwelcome sexual messages. Therefore, a strong emphasis on girls' experience of gender inequality and gender-based violence, both on and offline, must be mainstreamed throughout the entire document.

Gender stereotypes

Working with girls and women across the world, we hear every day about the ways in which harmful gender stereotypes and negative social norms negatively affect girls and women in all aspects of their lives. In particular, these stereotypes can affect girls' educational opportunities, push women into under-valued industries or cause them to be excluded from the labour market altogether. It is, for this reason, we would like to see the below addition to paragraph 61.



Proposed language:

62.

(26.split.a.)

The Commission recognizes that gender stereotypes and negative social norms, as well as systemic and structural barriers, are causing persistent gender gaps in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, preventing women's and girls' life-long learning opportunities as well as women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the technology workforce, including in fast-growing and well-paid careers such as in cloud computing, software and artificial intelligence development and data governance, and as entrepreneurs, content creators, innovators, researchers, and policy-makers and industry executives and leaders, and keeping them from attaining and retaining decent and quality jobs, and advancing in their careers, in those fields. **[ADD It recognizes that this occupational segregation limits women's economic opportunities and enables a culture in male-dominated industries which tolerates sexism and sexual harassment against women in the workplace, further compounding their exclusion from these industries].** It stresses the need to eliminate gender bias in order to promote the representation of women and girls in all their diversity in science, technology and innovation.



Education

WAGGGS expresses our support for the emphasis on the role of education in achieving gender equality and eradicating all forms of gender-based violence. Having created programmes for women and girls all over the world including our Free Being Me, She Surfs Freedom and Stop the Violence programmes, we know that civil society organisations have a wealth of expertise and knowledge to shape these educational resources and believe the Commission should acknowledge this as well as the opportunity to co-produce such resources directly with girls themselves.

Proposed language:

65.

(25.3. + 25.5. + 25.11. merged with 26.1. with elements of 26.split.b. and 26.split.a.)

The Commission reaffirms the need to ensure access to inclusive and equitable quality education, including digital literacy, to allow women and girls to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world, and in this regard stresses that information and communications technologies and applications can create new ways to enhance education, including early childhood education and lifelong learning opportunities. It also recognizes that digital learning can remove gender bias and stereotypes from curricula and learning material, involve all socializing agents that shape girls' interests and choices, develop **[ADD in partnership with girls and youth-led organisations]** gamified learning around subjects such as mental health, media literacy, online safety or evidence-based [comprehensive sexuality education], as well as customize learning experiences for girls with disabilities. It recognizes that exposing girls to computational thinking during their formative early childhood years can provide them with equal opportunities in technical fields. It encourages the inclusion of gender-responsive teaching strategies in digital literacy initiatives.